



# Illinois Veteran News

An Update from the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs ★ February 2017

## ★ From the Director



This February is a month of change and reflection. On Valentine's Day we announced our new pilot program, 'Tiny Boots' a child care program for our Illinois Veterans. Many of our veterans skip medical appointments or miss out on job interview opportunities because they don't have childcare. Thanks to the Tiny Boots Child Care Program, we can help to reduce the stress for our Illinois Heroes by providing that much needed childcare when they have a medical appointment or job interview. Our veterans can now get the medical treatment they deserve or explore job opportunities with peace of mind, knowing their child is safe while they are receiving medical assistance or interviewing for a job. Full details of this wonderful program are found in this newsletter.

February is also Black History Month and is a good time to recall the vast contributions African-Americans have made throughout the nation's military history. Most are aware of the Tuskegee Airmen and their heroic contributions during World War II. Some may be familiar with the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st Infantry Regiments that fought during the Indian Wars and performed a primary role in America's western expansion following the Civil War. But there are many more examples of African-American military contributions in the defense of this nation, which should be remembered during Black History Month. On February 22, we will offer a tribute to the African American Veteran at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago at Noon. Please join us as we remember the contributions of these brave men and women.

I am very proud to announce our new initiative called: Operation Seek & Assist. We will be seeking to serve more veterans statewide and to assist them in a manner that's tailored to their needs. We know there are Veterans in our great state that do not know that we can help them and their families with benefits that they have earned and deserve. If you are a veteran or know a veteran, please ask them to contact one of our Veteran Service Officers (VSO) and learn about their benefits. To find the closest VSO to where you live go to <https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/Pages/ServiceOffices.aspx>

**Erica Jeffries**

*Director, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs*

Our mission at the IDVA is very simple. To serve those who have served. In doing so, we serve not only the men and women who have worn the uniform, but also their families. It is our privilege to be able to help our veterans receive the benefits they have earned through service to our nation. Our goal is to empower our veterans and their families to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

We know there are many veterans within our great state who do not require any assistance – but we still want to encourage you to "Stand Up and Be Counted!" by registering with your local VSO. In doing so, you're helping IDVA to do a better job of planning for services, seeking federal funding and understanding the needs of our veteran communities statewide. [Click here to register.](#)

**We Thank you for your service and for your sacrifice and we at the IDVA look forward to offering our services to You.**

## ★ Purple Heart State



Senate Joint Resolution 57 was unanimously adopted recently by the Illinois House and Senate. The resolution designates Illinois as a “Purple Heart State,” honoring combat-wounded veterans for their service and sacrifice.

"This act of the General Assembly is a way to honor our Veterans who fought and bled for American freedom and sovereignty," said Representative Avery Bourne (R). "Their service, sacrifice, and love of country are commendable."

The Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration in the world in present use, and the first award made available to a common soldier.

General George Washington created the Order of the Purple Heart for Military Merit, now commonly called the Purple Heart, during the Revolutionary War. General Washington sought to recognize officers for outstanding valor.

The designation of Illinois as a “Purple Heart State” coincides with the newly dedicated Purple Heart Memorial, in Springfield, at Oak Ridge Cemetery.

The memorial pays tribute to all Illinois military personnel who were killed or wounded in action and can be seen at in the war memorial section, on the southwest corner of the cemetery.

## ★ Polar plunge

Members of our Anna team saw the Polar Plunge as an opportunity to support local Special Olympics by plunging into frigid water! The proceeds provide year-round sports and training opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Our Anna team won the Golden Plunger award for raising \$3,421. Although this was Angela Simmons's, Administrator for the Anna Veterans Home, first “plunge” she has volunteered for 8 years. “When I was asked to participate in this event, at first I said No Way! Then I realized that this challenge does not compare to the challenges that the athletes face every day, so I did it. It was cold but worth it,” said Angie.

**Congratulations to the members!**

*(left to right) Nan Hall (black sweatshirt), Holly Brantley (white hat), Shannon Aldridge (arms raised), Tracey Kucera (black headband), Lisa Berryhill (red shirt), Angela Simmons (pink shirt) and Chris Duck (gray shirt).*





## ★ “War Time” Daylight Saving Begins: February 9, 1942

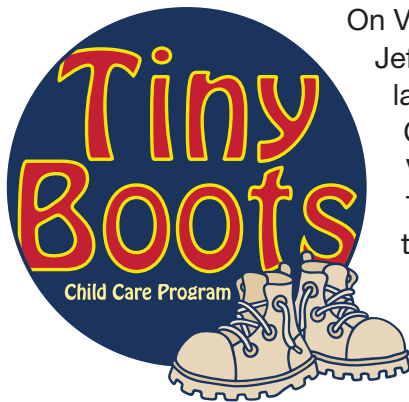
On February 9, 1942, “War Time”—a year-round daylight saving time—began in the United States. Passed by Congress and signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the year-round daylight saving time required that clocks be moved ahead one hour for the remainder of the war as a national defense measure to conserve energy.



America first implemented a partial-year daylight saving time in March 1918, during World War I, and though there was popular support for the wartime measure, there was also disapproval, primarily from farmers and the railroads. The national daylight saving time was repealed after the war ended, but it continued on at the local level, especially in the North, East, and parts of the Midwest.

Daylight saving time has remained a contentious issue in the United States ever since it was first implemented during World War I, as people debate its effect on energy, safety, farming, and much more. However, most of the United States now follows daylight saving time, with the exception of Arizona, Hawaii, and the U.S. territories.

## ★ Tiny Boots



On Valentine’s Day, Director Jeffries announced the launch of Tiny Boots Child Care Program at the Hines VA Hospital in Chicago. This program provides temporary childcare for any Illinois Veteran who has a medical, counseling appointment or a job interview. The

IDVA contracted with the YWCA Metropolitan Chicago to operate the program. “Many of our veterans skip medical appointments or miss out on job interview opportunities because they don’t have childcare. Thanks to the Tiny Boots Child Care Program, we can help to reduce the stress for our Illinois Heroes by providing that much needed childcare when they have a medical appointment or job interview. Our veterans can now get the medical treatment they deserve or explore job opportunities with peace of mind, knowing their child is safe while they are receiving medical assistance or interviewing for a job,” said **Erica Jeffries**, *Director of the IDVA*.

Registration for the program is simple – any eligible Veteran should contact the YWCA at <http://ywcachicago.org/tinybootsveterans> and fill out the Tiny Boots Program Application. To be eligible for this program veterans must be an Illinois veteran, have a verifiable medical appointment or job interview and notify the YWCA of appointments at least 1 week in advance. A completed Tiny Boots Application includes: Application, Emergency Contact Form, Medical Form and a Photo Release form.

The Illinois veteran would complete the form including verification of their appointment/job interview and return it to the website mentioned above. The YWCA Veterans’ Specialist will contact the provider and schedule childcare for the date and time of the veteran’s appointment. The veteran and the provider will receive an email confirmation with detailed childcare arrangements.

This pilot program will initially cover all Illinois veterans in Cook, Kane and DuPage Counties. The IDVA is working to expand the program throughout the State of Illinois.

## ★ New Employee

**Elisabeth Pennix**, the new IDVA General Counsel as of November, 2016, returns to us from a recent deployment with the U.S. Navy Reserves to the Office of the Secretary of Defense; specifically, working with the Military Commissions in Washington, D.C. and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Elisabeth has been with IDVA since November of 2013, initially hired as a Senior Program Manager where she managed the Women Veterans Program, Illinois Joining Forces before it became a stand-alone non-profit, and as the Gold Star Families liaison to The Office of the Governor. Elisabeth was asked to serve as Deputy General Counsel after the gubernatorial transition and was deployed shortly thereafter. Elisabeth has been a practicing attorney since 2004. She served as a judge advocate (JAG) in the U.S. Navy for over 7 years with various worldwide duty stations. She left active duty as a LCDR (O-4) in 2011 and worked as a consultant and sales engineer for a tech company before she came to IDVA. Elisabeth's varied professional legal background in the private, government, and military sectors across various practice areas; in-house counsel, defense counsel, legal assistance attorney, and chief prosecutor; makes her a well-rounded advisor and strong asset to our agency. She currently serves as our Ethics Advisor and General Counsel as well as serves in the U.S. Navy Reserves as a Commander (O-5).

## ★ IDVA Calendar

- 2/20 Washington's Birthday** – *State Office closed*
- 2/22 Tribute to African American Veterans**  
– *James R. Thompson Center - Chicago*
- 2/28 Desert Storm Remembrance Ceremony**  
– *Capitol Rotunda - Springfield*
- 3/14 Honor Lynn Brown – Employee of Quarter**  
– *Effingham*

## ★ Follow us



IDVA website

[www.illinois.gov/veterans](http://www.illinois.gov/veterans)

Facebook

[www.facebook.com/IllinoisDepartmentOfVeteransAffairs](https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisDepartmentOfVeteransAffairs)

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisWomenVeterans/>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/ILVetsAffairs>

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/il-dva>

## ★ Shop Online – Military Exchanges

The Defense Department announced last month that veterans will soon be able to shop online at military exchanges. The policy change will extend limited online military exchange shopping privileges to all honorably discharged veterans of the military, DoD officials said in a news release.

The shopping benefit will be effective this Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2017. While shopping privileges exclude the purchase of uniforms, alcohol and tobacco products, it includes the Exchange Services' dynamic online retail environment known so well to service members and their families.



State of Illinois  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



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